

Amendment to the Claims

Please amend the Claims as follows and without prejudice. This listing of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1 – 33 (CANCELLED)

34. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A method for manufacturing semiconductor granules intended to feed a semiconductor material manufacturing melt, said method comprising:

sintering powders of at least one material selected from the group consisting of silicon, germanium, gallium arsenide, and the alloys thereof so as to form said granules, said sintering step comprising the steps of compacting and thermal processing said powders,

wherein, the step of sintering comprises a compaction step followed with a thermal processing step, and

wherein the pressure of the compaction step ranges between 10 MPa and 1 GPa.

35. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A method for manufacturing semiconductor granules intended to feed a semiconductor material manufacturing melt, said method comprising:

sintering powders of at least one material selected from the group consisting of silicon, germanium, gallium arsenide, and the alloys thereof so

as to form said granules, said sintering step comprising the steps of compacting and thermal processing said powders,

wherein said compacting and thermal processing steps are performed at the same time defining a hot pressing step.

36. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of Claim 35, wherein, in the hot pressing step, the pressure is lower than 100 MPa and the temperature is greater than 800° C.

37. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A method for manufacturing semiconductor granules intended to feed a semiconductor material manufacturing melt, said method comprising:

sintering powders of at least one material selected from the group consisting of silicon, germanium, gallium arsenide, and the alloys thereof so as to form said granules, said sintering step comprising the steps of compacting and thermal processing said powders,

wherein the powders are doped semiconductor powders.

38. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A method for manufacturing semiconductor granules intended to feed a semiconductor material manufacturing melt, said method comprising:

sintering powders of at least one material selected from the group consisting of silicon, germanium, gallium arsenide, and the alloys thereof so

as to form said granules, said sintering step comprising the steps of compacting and thermal processing said powders; and

annealing or doping of the granules.

39. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A method for manufacturing semiconductor granules intended to feed a semiconductor material manufacturing melt, said method comprising:

sintering powders of at least one material selected from the group consisting of silicon, germanium, gallium arsenide, and the alloys thereof so as to form said granules, said sintering step comprising the steps of compacting and thermal processing said powders,

wherein said granules have a porosity ranging between about 20% and about 40%.